

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) Process for the preparation of lactic acid and/or lactate wherein a pentose-containing substrate is homolactically fermented by a moderately thermophilic *Bacillus* species, which ferments anaerobically.
2. (Original) Process according to claim 1 wherein the pentose-containing substrate comprises xylose.
3. (Currently Amended) Process according to claim 1-~~or 2~~, wherein the moderately thermophilic *Bacillus* species is selected from *Bacillus coagulans* and/or *Bacillus smithii*.
4. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the pentose-containing substrate comprises arabinose.
5. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the substrate comprises glucose.
6. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the fermentation is performed by a mixture of moderately thermophilic *Bacillus* species and another lactic-acid producing microorganism.

7. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the lactic acid and/or lactate formed is separated from the fermentation broth.
8. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the moderately thermophilic *bacillus* species is grown on a chemically defined medium.
9. (Original) Process according to claim 8 wherein the biomass is removed from the fermentation broth prior to the separation of the lactic acid and/or lactate therefrom.
10. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any one of the preceding claims 8-9~~ claim 8 wherein the lactic acid and/or lactate produced is subjected to one or more purification steps after separation from the fermentation broth.